

CANDIDATE INFORMATION GUIDE

**INVESTIGATIVE TECHNICIAN I - 60347
WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Candidate Information Guide is to help you prepare for the written examination for the job of Investigative Technician I with the State of Alabama. You must take this written examination and score in a reachable position in order to be hired as an Investigative Technician I.

This Candidate Information Guide provides you with important information about the selection procedure and suggestions for preparing for the written examination. You will not be allowed to use this booklet while you take the exam.

II. JOB PREVIEW

The classification of Investigative Technician I has a pay range of \$26,464.80 to \$40,252.80. Investigative Technician I positions are available with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency located in Montgomery, Alabama.

The Investigative Technician I job is entry level work in gathering and sorting data pertaining to Missing Persons, Criminal Investigations, and Criminal Intelligence. Employees in this class are responsible for obtaining and processing intelligence and criminal indexing data. Responsibilities include summarizing intelligence data and preparing reports for officials and concerned personnel. Work involves obtaining and recording background information on individuals and organizations whose names appear in the course of criminal investigations. Work is performed under the supervision of a command officer or Intelligence Analyst who reviews the work in progress and upon completion for conformance with prescribed policies and procedures. Work at this level involves receiving and summarizing intelligence reports; preparing case charts or reports of intelligence findings; responding to official inquiries from other law enforcement agencies; collecting data relating to intelligence activities, events, and incidents; informing field investigators of data to assist them in investigations; obtaining background information on individuals and organizations; conducting oral briefings; keeping accurate up-to-date records of all activity performed; and operating NCIC telecommunications terminal and computer terminal.

III. PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

A. General Information on “What To Do Before the Exam”

Listed below are some suggestions for things to do before the exam to help you be more prepared. These suggestions can also help you arrive at the testing site on time and with the proper things that you will need to take the test.

1. Study this guide so you know what to expect at the test site. The more prepared you are for an activity, the more comfortable and less nervous you

will feel. Knowing what to expect helps improve your ability be calm and focus on the exam. This guide provides information about the test day as well as ideas on how to study and prepare for the written examination.

2. Be well rested. Get a good night's sleep for several nights in a row before the written examination.
3. Allow plenty of time to get to the examination site. If you are rushed and late, you will be upset when you arrive. Plan to get there at least 20 minutes before the time the examination is scheduled to begin.
4. Cell phones and pagers should only be brought to the test site if it is absolutely necessary. Phones and pagers must be set to silent mode and cannot be used during the exam.
5. Dress comfortably. You will have up to three (3) hours to complete the exam so you may be at the test site for a few hours. Also, only test monitors will be present at the test site; you will not see any of the hiring authorities on the test day.
6. Do **not** bring written materials with you to the test site. You **will not** be allowed to use this guide or other study materials during the exam. All materials needed to complete the exam will be given to you at the exam.
7. You must bring the **schedule postcard** that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department to the examination site. The postcard informs you of the location, date, and time you are scheduled to take the exam.
8. To protect your own interests, you will also be asked to bring **picture identification** to the examination site. Additional information is provided on page 14.
9. You should bring the following supplies with you to the test site: **pencils, a highlighter, and a calculator**. Additional information is provided on page 14.

B. General Information on “What To Do During the Exam”

Listed below are some suggestions for what you may do during the exam. These suggestions can help you know what to expect at the test site and complete your exam more efficiently.

1. It is normal for some people to feel nervous when they take tests. Whenever you are going to do something important, it is good to feel a bit keyed up. You need to **focus on the exam** and keep your mind on the test questions, rather than your feelings.

2. You will have up to three (3) hours to complete the exam so you must use your time efficiently. The exam is not a test of how quickly you can answer questions. However, it may not allow you all the time you might like to have. On exams, some questions are easy and some are hard so you must **manage your time wisely**. Do not give up or become discouraged by the difficult questions. If it is hard for you to figure out an answer, it is probably hard for other people too. On the other hand, do not spend too much time on any one question just because it is hard. This may not leave you enough time to answer questions that you know later in the exam. Sections of the exam that require reading paragraphs or passages normally take more time to complete. You should remain aware of the time during the exam to budget your allotted three-hour time period.
3. You should answer every question on the exam. Mark one answer on your answer sheet for each test item, even if it is a guess. Try to finish as much of the test as you can. You will not be penalized for guessing. You should always check to make sure that your answers to questions are marked in the location on the answer sheet that matches the number of the question you are answering.
4. Exam monitors will be present at the test site to administer the test. You **must** follow the instructions of the monitor at all times. Test monitors can answer questions concerning exam administration issues only. They **will not** be able to interpret exam questions for you. The monitor will check your picture identification and schedule postcard and provide you with test materials. The examination monitor will instruct you not to open any examination booklets until you are instructed to do so. You will receive instructions concerning restroom availability during the test administration. It is important to remember that the time that you take to use the restroom is time away from working on the examination. Candidates making any disturbances or caught cheating or using their cell phones will be disqualified from the exam.
5. If you have time remaining after you have completed the test, you may want to review your exam. Try not to over-analyze questions and change your original answers unless you have a good reason. You may just want to review your responses on the more difficult questions. Once you have finished, you should turn in all test materials, including instructions and scratch paper, to the test monitors.

IV. EXAM OVERVIEW

A. General Exam Information

A job analysis study of the Investigative Technician I classification was conducted prior to developing the examination. Employees who work in this position and their supervisors participated in this study to determine the job duties performed by an Investigative Technician I and knowledges and abilities an Investigative Technician I must possess in order to perform the job duties of the position.

The study showed that the following knowledges and abilities are associated with the job duties of the position. An Investigative Technician I must possess the knowledges and abilities listed below on their first day of work, before training:

K-05 Knowledge of English to include grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure and form as needed to compose reports, letters and memoranda and proofread information for accuracy.

A-01 Ability to work multiple projects concurrently as needed to meet deadlines and provide agents fresh and valid information.

A-03 Ability to work independently with little or no supervision as needed to manage activities, carry out duties and meet requirements.

A-04 Ability to operate a computer as needed to enter, retrieve, modify and/or store data and information on/from a personal computer and AOC, DOC, NCIC and/or CJIS computer terminals/systems, receive and generate intelligence information, create spreadsheets, analyze information, monitor and review offender data and information and maintain caseload data.

A-05 Ability to read and comprehend material written at various levels of technicality such as correspondence, departmental manuals and federal and state laws as needed to follow instructions, understand case files and ensure adherence.

A-06 Ability to communicate in writing at various levels of technicality as needed to compose correspondence, complete forms, produce office inquiries and provide information/instructions.

A-07 Ability to communicate orally whether one-on-one or to a group, in person or over the telephone with individuals as needed to conduct interviews and briefings, testify in court and receive/provide information and instructions.

A-08 Ability to maintain confidentiality of information gathered during research and investigations as needed to be discrete and abide by confidentiality laws of the state.

A-09 Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with individuals such as law enforcement as needed to assist in analyzing information leading to the arrest and conviction of legal offenders, departmental rules and regulations, obtain cooperation and perform liaison duties.

A-10 Ability to follow oral and written instructions from individuals such as supervisors, case agents and forensics investigators.

A-11 Ability to perform simple mathematical computations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers, decimals and fractions as needed to read, analyze and/or verify data and information.

The examination for Investigative Technician I will measure the four areas above that appear in **bold print**. The remaining abilities will be measured by the minimum qualifications contained on the job announcement or must be demonstrated during the probationary period if you are hired into the Investigative Technician I position.

V. EXAMINATION DESCRIPTION

You will have up to three hours to take the written examination. When you read the word “exam” in the rest of these instructions and notes, it will be referring to the entire written, multiple-choice examination for the position of Investigative Technician I.

If you require special testing accommodations to participate in this exam, you should notify the State Personnel Department of this need as soon as possible. The phone number is (334)242-3389.

Approximately two weeks before the exam, you will receive notification of the exact location of the exam as well as the day and time that you are scheduled to take the exam. If you are unable to attend the exam, you may call State Personnel and asked to be put on the mailing list so that you will be notified the next time this classification is opened for receipt of applications.

One study suggestion is for you to become familiar with the kinds of questions that will be used in the exam. The next section of this guide will describe the exam.

A. Written Examination

A multiple-choice item is one in which a question is asked or a statement is presented, and several alternatives are offered as possible responses. You then choose the most appropriate response from the alternatives.

The Investigative Technician I examination is divided into four sections: Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Follow Instructions and English.

B. Sample Test Items

Section I: Mathematics

This section is designed to measure your ability to perform mathematical computations.

Example 1:

You are working on multiple cases. Of your cases, 28% are rural crimes with 122 cases total. How many cases are rural crimes? (Round to the nearest whole number.)

- A. 23
- B. 25
- C. 29
- D. 35

The correct choice is A. When you divide 28 by 122 you get .23. Then you multiple .23 by 100 to get 23.

Example 2:

<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Price</u>
File fasteners	Box of 10	\$2.64
Magnifiers	Box of 4	\$4.32

Assume you place an order for two boxes of file fasteners and one box of magnifiers. What is the total cost of the order?

- A. \$6.96
- B. \$8.88
- C. \$9.60
- D. None of the above

The correct choice is C. The cost of two boxes of file fasteners is \$2.64 each, which equals \$5.28. The cost of one box of magnifiers is \$4.32. The cost of two boxes of file fasteners, \$5.28, plus one box of magnifiers, \$4.32, equals \$9.60 ($\$2.64 + \$2.64 + \$4.32 = \9.60).

Sections II: Reading Comprehension

This section is designed to measure your ability to read and comprehend technical information.

Example 1:

Disposition By Transfer

When an agency purchases an item from another agency, the receiving property manager will sign the original PP-1 Form and initial all copies of the form. When an agency transfers a piece of personal property to another agency, the transferring property manager should prepare a PP-1 Form and the recipient should sign the original and all copies.

Agencies purchasing an item from another agency should _____.

- A. have the transferring property manager sign the original PP-1 Form and all copies of the form.
- B. have the transferring property manager sign the original PP-1 Form and initial all copies of the form.
- C. have the receiving property manager sign the original PP-1 Form and all copies of the form.
- D. have the receiving property manager sign the original PP-1 Form and initial all copies of the form.

The correct choice is D. Refer to the first sentence of the paragraph above.

Section III: Follow Instructions

This section is designed to measure your ability to follow instructions.

Example 1:

Assume you go to work at a new job and are given these instructions:

“This is your cubicle, and I am your boss. People in this office call each other by their first names, so you can call me Sara. The trouble is, it makes a much better impression on clients if we use last names instead of first names. Whenever you mention my name to outsiders, you should call me Mrs. Baker.”

According to your new boss, good office manners require that you call her:

- A. “Sara” in the office and “Mrs. Baker” anywhere else.
- B. “Mrs. Baker” whenever you talk to clients.
- C. “Mrs. Baker” in the office and “Sara” anywhere else.
- D. “Mrs. Baker” at all times.

The correct choice is B. Your new boss stated that she liked for people in the office to call each other by their first names; however, she believes that it makes a better impression on clients to call co-workers by their last names.

Section IV: English

This section is designed to measure your knowledge of the English language, which includes grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

Example 1:

You will be given a sentence that could come from a report or memorandum. The sentence will contain one or more blanks. You will be given four words from which to choose to fill the blank. Select the word that is spelled correctly to finish the sentence.

24. The situation did not require the use of _____ force.
- A. excessive
 - B. ecessive
 - C. excessive
 - D. exceseve

The correct choice is C; this alternative is spelled correctly. Alternatives A, B, and D contain common misspellings of the word.

Example 2:

Read each sentence and decide which of the four in the group contains **no errors** in English grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and/or sentence structure.

17.
 - A. The number of calls we received are greater after lunch.
 - B. I laid the report on your desk.
 - C. He needed to re-vise his filing system.
 - D. The attached memo was written by Johnny and I.

The correct choice is B. In A, the subject is “number” which is singular, and the verb is “are” which is plural, so the sentence lacks subject/verb agreement. In C, the word “re-vise” should not be hyphenated. In D, “by Johnny and I” is a prepositional phrase. “By” is the preposition, and the phrase “Johnny and I” is the object of the preposition so they should be in objective form rather than subjective form. The correct phrase would be “by Johnny and me.”

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TAKING THIS EXAM

A. Strategies for Answering Questions

Consider the following suggestions to use while you are taking the exam.

1. Read the items carefully.

Read the full items, and all of the alternatives. Be sure you know what the item asks and what the choices mean before you try to answer. Sometimes people choose wrong answers simply because they fail to pay attention to part of the item, fail to pay attention to part of an alternative, or fail to read all four of the alternatives.

2. Choose the answer that is generally best.

In order to keep the exam items concise, a lot of detail is not included in the questions and statements. Questions are not intended to be tricky or misleading. You should select the answer that would be considered to be generally the best.

3. For exam items, mark a response to each question.

a. You may read the item and decide you know the answer. Mark your answer on the answer sheet. Spend no more time on that question.

b. You may read the item and decide you are fairly sure of the answer, but you may want to think more about it. Mark your answer sheet and make a note in the test booklet so it will be easy to find later.

c. You may read the item and decide one or two answers are definitely not the best response. Eliminate the answers you know are wrong, and then direct your attention to those choices that could be correct.

d. You may read the item and decide that figuring out the answer is possible, but it will take you a lot of time. Do not mark any answer at that time. Note the question in your test booklet so you can come back to it later. Try to finish the test in enough time to go back to answer the item.

e. You may read the item and decide you do not know the answer and all you can do is guess. So, make a guess right then. Mark the answer sheet to show your answer. Do not waste any more time on that question. There is no penalty for guessing, and sometimes you guess right. Likewise, if you see that you are going to run out of time without finishing the exam, you may fill in answers on the Scantron without reading the questions.

4. Do not change answers unless you have a good reason.

When people change their answers, they more often change from a right answer to a wrong one, rather than from a wrong answer to a right one. The reason seems to be that they start over-analyzing the item. Sometimes they think about some specific case or situation, which results in choosing an answer on the basis of facts that are not given in the item, which leads them to an inaccurate response. Other times people think about what one part of an item means and overlook the meaning of the remainder of the item.

5. Use your time efficiently.

You will have three hours to complete the exam so you should manage your time wisely. This length of time should allow you adequate time to finish the exam, but you may not have all the time you would like to study the questions. Be especially careful in the sections of the test that require reading passages of information, because reading is often very time consuming. Try to read at a normal pace so that you can finish the test and have time to go back and work on the questions you saved until last.

6. Do not give up.

Many people give up too easily on test items. If an item looks too hard, they do not even try. You should answer every item, even if your answer is a guess. Look for the specific information needed to answer the item. Sometimes you will be able to eliminate one or more answers, thus increasing your chances of guessing the correct answer. However, do not spend too much time on any one item just because it is hard. Doing that may not leave you enough time to give the answers that you know.

7. Make notes in your test booklet.

You may write or highlight in your test booklet. Remember to mark answers on your Scantron sheet. Only answers recorded on your Scantron answer sheet will be scored. For some test items, you must read a passage of information in order to answer. You may wish to highlight important information to assist you in answering questions pertaining to the passage.

B. Study Suggestions

You may find some of the following ideas helpful in preparing for the exam:

1. Take more than one session to prepare for the exam.
2. Study in a quiet place. Do not study when you are doing something else.

3. Make up your own test questions and answer them.
4. Pretend that you are in a real testing situation and try not to talk to anyone else while you are studying or taking the sample tests.
5. Practice following instructions. Read sections of “how-to books” or instruction manuals you may have at home and practice taking notes or highlighting important aspects of the sections.
6. Review the example items in this study guide.
7. Go to the Internet, library, or bookstore to locate sources of information regarding the important knowledge areas required for this job.
8. Study whatever materials you believe will assist you in learning each of the abilities required for the Investigative Technician I job as listed in Section IV of this booklet. For the Investigative Technician I job, this may include books on English grammar and mathematics.

C. What To Bring To The Examination

Do **NOT** bring this booklet to the exam location. You will not be permitted to use it during the exam. Likewise, do **NOT** bring any of your other notes, manuals, or study materials to the exam.

To protect your own interests, you will be asked to bring **picture identification** to the exam location. Examples of acceptable forms of identification are a valid driver license, a military identification card, a student identification card, or some other form of identification with a picture. You only need to have one form of picture identification. Please remember to bring to the exam site the **schedule postcard** that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department.

Bring **several number 2 pencils with erasers** to the exam. It is also recommended that you bring a **highlighter pen** and a **battery-operated calculator** that performs basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, or have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions) are not allowed. ***Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted.*** Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

VII. EXAM CONTACT

If you have any questions about the exam, you should call State Personnel at **(334) 242-3389**. Staff members are not allowed to discuss the specific content of the exam.

VIII. SCORING

This examination should be graded in approximately four to six weeks. You will receive notification of your banded score and standing on the register by postcard. You may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at www.personnel.state.al.us. From the home page, you should click on “Applicants” and then “Register Standings”, and follow the instructions for an immediate response.

A. Banded Scoring

When the written exam for the Investigative Technician I is graded, the scores will likely be grouped into bands. When you receive your score on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (e.g., 95, 80, 64). Rather, you will be informed into which band your score fell. The following information is to help you understand the banding procedure.

B. What is Banding?

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to do the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and mathematically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

C. Misconceptions about Banding

There are many misconceptions about banding. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

1. Misconception: Each band should have the same number of people.

The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically, there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large, and at other times, it may be very small. We do not force bands to be a certain size. The size of the bands is based on the scores candidates make.

2. Misconception: Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.

Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Think of a band as a group of scores that statistically are not meaningfully different. In school, two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into a band called “A” because the teacher cannot be sure that 0.2 is a real difference in achievement. Think of scores on achievement tests children take in school. The fine print on the tests always cautions you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the

comparative score which uses some grouping techniques such as percentiles, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding.

3. Misconception: Band numbers are the same as letter grades.

Band 1 does not equate to an A, Band 2 a B, and so forth. In school, a predetermined numerical score (e.g., 90-100) equals an A. In banding, scores are banded only in relation to one another. Unlike grade school bands, the width of bands is not set in advance. You compete against your peers only. Your scores are set in relation to your peers only.

4. Misconception: A band score on one test has the same value as a band score on another test.

Banded scores are test-specific and cannot be compared to banded scores on other tests. Candidates' scores on a specific test determine the number of bands and how many people are in each band.

5. Misconception: People who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.

Time spent in a job may not be the same as skill in doing the job. The people with the strongest skills (or who did the best on the exam) should be in the top bands. Some of these people will have been in the job longer than others. Years of service do not always equal proficiency.

6. Misconception: A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.

This statement is false. A band score of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. The true test of your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy. Remember, your rank on a register is more important than your banded score and determine if your name will be certified out to the appointing agency. If you are placed on the register, you passed the exam.

7. Misconception: Banding replaced the "Rule of 10."

Banding did not replace the "Rule of 10." This rule determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied). Now, all of the scores within a band are considered tied. "Rule of 10" specifies that the appointing agency must have at least ten names from which to choose.

8. Misconception: People in a band do not differ.

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to separate them.

Scoring Information

State Personnel Terminology

The following terms are used by the State Personnel Department regarding test scores and employment that results from those scores. This section is provided to help you understand State Personnel terminology and procedures.

Register: A register is a list of all individuals who have successfully completed the selection procedure for a State Merit System job. The register is a complete list of individuals who are eligible for employment in a certain job classification.

Certification: A certification is a list of the top ten individuals on an employment register. These are the individuals who are immediately appointable to positions.

Since the register for Investigative Technician I will likely use Banded Scoring, a certification may contain more than ten names. If Band 1 contains 15 names, then all 15 individuals will be on the Certification. Likewise, if Band 1 contains 3 people and Band 2 contains 25 people, then all individuals in both Bands 1 and 2 would be on the certification since both bands are needed to provide the agency with a minimum of ten names. Since individuals within a Band are considered to be tied, the certification cannot split up a Band. Certifications may be statewide or specific to a county within the state.